African Nova Scotian Exhibit Now Online

Tourism, Culture and Heritage

News Releases

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Nova Scotians and others will now have a new and exciting way of finding out more about African Nova Scotian history.

The Nova Scotia Archives is launching a virtual exhibit and online resource called African Nova Scotians in the Age of Slavery and Abolition. The exhibit coincides with the United Nations' designation of 2004 as the International Year to Commemorate the Struggle Against Slavery and Its Abolition.

"This new resource will contribute to a greater public awareness, understanding and appreciation of African Nova Scotian history and culture," said Rodney MacDonald, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage. "This site will be accessible to people from around the world, and will raise awareness of our province as a heritage tourism destination."

Visitors to the exhibit can search a database containing about 5,000 names. The database was created from official records of African American immigrants who came to Nova Scotia in 1783 and in 1815-16.

"About 10,000 people of African descent came to Nova Scotia between 1749 and 1816. This exhibit provides remarkable insight into their experiences," said Barry Barnet, Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs. "It reflects an amazing story of struggle and accomplishment in the face of adversity."

The exhibit pieces together the story of early African Nova Scotians through digitized government documents, letters, newspapers and other unofficial sources. It includes striking images of everyday life, such as a watercolor of a family, probably from Upper Hammond Plains, heading to the Halifax market on a Saturday morning in 1835.

"The exhibit has been designed to appeal broadly to everyone, including general-interest visitors, genealogists, secondary and post-secondary students, and especially those interested in African Nova Scotian history," said Brian Spears, provincial archivist. "We believe it will be a popular addition to our website, which already receives more than 400,000 visits every year."

Visitors will also find a virtual photo exhibit depicting some of the original black settlements and descendants of the early settlers in the 1880-1955 time period. Among the communities photographed are Preston, Upper Hammond Plains and Five Mile

Plains. There are also memorable individual portraits.

With funding from Canadian Heritage, the exhibit provides access to a wide variety of documentary sources relating to early African Nova Scotian history and settlement. It is available at **www.gov.ns.ca/nsarm/virtual/africanns** .

FOR BROADCAST USE:

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